

"Alias Jimmy Valentine"

Novelized by
FREDERICK R. TOOMBS
From the Great
Play by
PAUL ARMSTRONG

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CHAPTER XI.

JIMMY VALENTINE entered his private office from the room where the new vault had been erected. He saw Rose Lane standing close to his desk, where Bobby was presiding with all the dignity that went with his age. The girl's eyes met his, but only for an instant. Valentine lowered his gaze to the floor, his thoughts whirling rapidly through his brain.

True, at one time he had had serious thought concerning the beautiful young woman who had saved him from Sing Sing, from Warden Handler and the warden's favorite pastime of "solitaire."

But of late he had come to realize that he would be doing her a lasting wrong, a vital injustice, to permit himself to make any serious advances toward her. She had been attracted by him. She was now even more interested in him. He was observing enough to learn this. As for his own emotions toward her? He loved her. That no one would deny who saw him in her company. He could not conceal it. Even the infantile Bobby had guessed what he had endeavored to make his secret. Yet he had realized plainly the uncertainty of his position. At any moment the unexpected might happen, or, rather, the expected might happen, and some one would possibly uncover and reveal phases of his past that he would be unable to explain. Such had been the guiding thought of Jimmy Valentine in his social intercourse with the banker's daughter during his tenure as assistant cashier in the bank in Springfield, and now he

saw more clearly than ever the wisdom of his course. Doyle-Doyle, the relentless tracker of men—had threatened to "get" him, and Doyle was always an element to be reckoned with. Although Doyle's threat had been made years before, Valentine had never underestimated the detective's ability nor his tenacity of purpose. While he, Valentine, had taken precautions which he firmly considered would prevent Doyle from getting a hold on him again, yet, after all, it was by no means definitely assured that he would not defeat the ex-convict in his ambition to live "on the square," therefore Valentine must under no circumstance make any serious advances to-

ward Rose Lane. The burden of misery that might descend upon him would only be given greater weight. Valentine desired to talk alone with Rose Lane, and after a lengthy conversation, punctuated by lavish promises of hunting trips, sent the lad away to play with Kitty in the new vault, which for their purpose became a smuggler's cave.

The assistant cashier stepped forward toward Rose, who stood close to his desk, resting her sabbie foot on its polished top.

"To what am I indebted for this pleasure?" he asked of her. "Yourself." She smiled graciously on him as she spoke. Valentine drew near to her. "How?"

"Don't you suppose I like you as well as do the children?" she answered gayly. "Do you?" he asked anxiously. "Yes, but why is it that you never do call on me any more?" she questioned reproachfully.

"Well—because"—he became very uncomfortable. She must never know the true reason for his avoidance of her.

"Do you think it's fair to use a woman's weapon against her? You know it's a woman's birthright to say 'because' when she"—

"I meant"—

"What?"

"Oh—ah—what were we talking about?"

"As to why you don't call on me any more."

Valentine struggled to think of a successful mode of escape from answering the question.

"Well, now—don't you see," he stammered. "Of course you do." He was becoming more involved every moment.

The girl's smile began to fade. Rather grimly she interrupted him. "No, I don't see at all," was her announcement. She moved away from the desk.

"Well, Miss Lane, I"—

The telephone bell rang at his desk. He bent forward and put the receiver to his ear. As he hung up the receiver a clerk entered.

"Will you have the cash now?" the employee asked.

"In a few minutes."

No sooner had the clerk made his exit when a messenger boy entered, bearing a telegram. Valentine tore it open, apologizing to Rose as he did so. The girl saw that the assistant cashier was very busy. She determined to leave him for the present.

As Valentine dismissed the boy she announced that if the press of business would not continue all day she would return. Valentine assured her that in a half hour he would be at leisure and that he would sacrifice everything else in order to talk to her. She started toward the door, assuring him that she would return. As she opened the door she turned and cast a smile in the direction of the assistant cashier.

But Valentine did not notice it. He did not see it. His eyes were glued to the slip of yellow paper that he held in his hand. The girl saw that as he read the telegram an expression of tenseness, of unbridled excitement, crept across his face. Wonderingly she softly closed the door. A few steps carried her before Valentine, who looked up in surprise, thinking she had gone.

"What is it—that telegram?" she gasped. "It's bad news for you—very bad," she went on. "I must know."

Valentine, undergoing a pronounced shock owing to the contents of the message which he held in his hand, was almost completely unstrung by the interruption of the girl he loved. Was it not fate that prompted her to appear before him at the very moment when—

"Oh, it is nothing," he said weakly. "Merely a little business tangle—that is all."

He stepped out from behind his desk, crumpling the fateful telegram in his hand, and gently led the girl to the door. "Remember," he said, "I have an engagement with you in a half hour."

"I will remember."

Unconvinced, mystified and thoroughly agitated by his nervous manner, Rose Lane went out of the office. Valentine, smiling as best he could under the circumstances, closed the door behind her. He crossed to her chair, sank into it and flattened the wrinkled telegram before him. Again he read it from end to end:

"Look out," he read. "Doyle will be in town this afternoon at 4 to see you about an important matter."

The assistant cashier dropped his chin into his palm and stared vacantly at the opposite wall.

"Doyle," he muttered—"George Doyle. He said he'd get me if it took ten years—a lifetime. Well, perhaps he can; then, again, perhaps he cannot. At any rate, he can probably ruin my career, my hopes, my standing here, where I have friends who believe in me."

Valentine leaned back meditatively in his chair. The fatal telegram dropped unheeded to the floor. His mouth set determinedly. A new fire blazed in his eyes, the fire that had consumed him and had spurred him on when in the days and nights of the past he had ventured forth on a desperate enterprise.

He would give George Doyle a race, that he would. He would match his wit against that of the skilled sleuth. He already had laid the basis for what now must be his course of procedure, and he believed that it would withstand even the cunning and force of George Doyle. At any rate, he could try.

Valentine leaned forward and pressed a button. A clerk entered. The assistant cashier hesitated a moment, then spoke quickly.

"Tell the watchman to come here," he directed.

The clerk nodded and went out in search of Red Flanagan—yes, Red, none other than the one time accomplice of Jimmy Valentine, whom the latter, true to his word, had taken with him in his attempt to "go it straight."

Flanagan must be told of the coming of Doyle, who was his sworn enemy also. In addition, Red would have to assist the assistant cashier, now known as Mr. Randall, in the maneuver which the latter was about to execute.

Then there was Avery—old Bill Avery. From the day that Valentine had sent him away from the hotel in Albany Avery had been making heroic efforts to live "on the square."

The three years that had elapsed since No. 1289 had advanced Avery, long a "yeggman" of the most desperate type, the price of a railroad ticket, had made a revolutionary transformation in him. Today he was married, had a growing business and had performed for Valentine a service that was to render the vengeful efforts of George Doyle much more difficult and somewhat less effective than the de-

tective would relish should he ever learn the truth.

Avery had been in communication with Valentine on various occasions in a secret manner. So carefully concealed, in fact, had been his moves that not even Red Flanagan had obtained the slightest knowledge of them.

True, Red was aware that Valentine had received various puzzling communications from one "Mr. Cronin," but how was Red to know that Mr. Cronin was Bill Avery unless the assistant cashier was pleased so to inform him, which he was not?

At first Valentine had had the belief that some friend was responsible for the sending of the warning telegram,



"I WILL REMEMBER."

but now that he more calmly considered the matter he dismissed that thought. Another idea fixed itself in his brain, which would cause him to govern his actions accordingly in the face of the danger that he wisely acknowledged to himself to be vitally alarming. At any cost he must prevent Doyle from turning Rose Lane and her father against him. They had trusted him—they alone—in the first instance, and so it would be wit against wit to defeat Doyle and, if need be, life against life.

The minutes passed. What could be the matter with the clerk or with Red? Had the watchman, too, received a warning? And if so had he followed the impulse that had first come to Jimmy Valentine, to flee—the time honored resource of the crook, the time honored confession of the crook, might? No; Red would not desert Jimmy Valentine in an emergency like this for—

A voice was heard outside in the vault room: "All right, Kitty. I'll play some more with you in a few minutes. Mr. Randall wants me." It was the voice of Red Flanagan addressed to the little girl, whom he daily gave "piggyback" rides, at the daily hazard of his situation.

The door swung open, and Red stood before the assistant cashier. But not even his old mother, if she had been alive, would have recognized him.

Hair as red as ever it was, eyes as blue and smile equally as innocent as that which had misled half a dozen sternly inclined judges in the court of special sessions in years gone, yet the figure that appeared was, and at the same time it was not, that of Red Flanagan, whose photograph adorned not less than five rogues' galleries.

The uniform—that was it. The blue-gray coat and trousers, loosely fitted, and the peaked cap, bearing in gold letters "Watchman," were the actual causes of his transformation, so far as outward indications were concerned. As for the inward changes—those quite hidden from the human eye—well, there were but two persons who could describe how they had come about. Those two persons were Red Flanagan and Jimmy Valentine.

Red stood before the assistant cashier and doffed his imposing watchman's cap.

"Want me, Randall?" he asked. "Yes." He looked away from Red, unwilling to break to him the news that Doyle was on their track.

CHAPTER XII.

"GEE," went on Red enthusiastically, not appreciating the reason for Valentine's silence, "gee, but that Kitty is a great kid! Ain't it funny how a kid like that will get hold of a tough old tramp like me?"

"Nice child," commented Valentine. He picked up the telegram and handed it to Red.

"Red, read that," he said dully, as though discouraged.

The other read in silence.

"Doyle! Good heaven!" he exclaimed.

"Doyle," said Valentine. "It took him quite a while to uncover us, didn't it?"

"But he's finally done it—got your name and everything."

"Did you notice it wasn't signed?"

"Yes. Who do you suppose tipped you?"

"Doyle," was Valentine's amazing response.

"Doyle!" cried Red, starting back. The assistant cashier bent toward the watchman.

"Doyle sent that, Red. Don't you see he's not sure of me? But if I ran away from the bank when that telegram came—out of town for the afternoon—he'd know he had me."

"Never thought I'd have ducked," commented Red. "And now he'll turn me up too. I'm going." He fingered his hat nervously.

"You're not. He don't want you, and if you stay where you belong he won't see you."

Red nodded his head decisively. "I'll stay closer to the bank than an emigrant to his tag. And you, Jimmy?"

Valentine smiled as the other lapsed off in his excitement into using his old name.

"Jimmy?" How natural that sounds, Red!" he said reminiscently.

"Excuse me. I meant 'Mr. Randall,'" protesting.

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"No; it's all right, only don't by any chance use it before Doyle, because I'm going to alibi Doyle until he'll think he's lost his eyesight."

"Alibi?" repeated Red curiously.

"I've heard o' that before."

"Alibi, that's it, Red," replied Valentine. And he continued rapidly:

"You haven't forgotten the one great refuge of the crook, have you—our old friend the alibi? Something which proves you were not where you were when something happened. I was never Jimmy Valentine, Red. I was never in Sing Sing. I've been straight all my life and can prove it. I've been waiting for Mr. Doyle nearly three years, and I've got him beat. I never did that job in Springfield, Massachusetts. I was never there in my life. And if I've got to use the crook's tools to beat it I'm justified. I'm living straight and I'm going to, and all the gods are with me, Red." He took a scrapbook from a drawer and opened it. "Look at that. For five years you will find clippings of Lee Randall when he lived in St. Paul. That man was my cousin. He went to Alaska and never came back. My name is also Lee Randall, and I defy Doyle to prove he ever saw me."

Valentine, out of breath owing to the long speech he had delivered at top speed, leaned back and gazed triumphantly at Flanagan. The latter stared amazedly at the assistant cashier, trying to guess as to whether or not he was telling the truth. Well, there was a scrapbook. That would afford ready means of proving Valentine's words. Red picked up the book and swiftly skimmed the pages. His attention was held by one of the clippings. He read aloud:

"St. Paul News, March 12, 1906.—The speaker of the evening was Mr. Lee Randall. His subject was—"

"Look at that other one," interrupted Valentine, pointing. "See how they join up with the day I came here. And Avery has sent me something that will make Mr. Doyle's eyes blink like an owl."

Red laughed grimly. The telephone bell rang.

"Avery! Did you say Avery?" asked Red.

"Yes," picking up the receiver. Then to the operator: "Yes, send Mr. Cronin right in. There's a friend of his here who wants to see him." He looked significantly across at Red.

Flanagan glanced around the room.

continued on page seven

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vices will be held at St. Rose Catholic
church every Friday afternoon at three
o'clock.

Sale Of Hampshires.

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made the following sales of Hampshires:
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